Abstract of the Disclosure

The need to decrease paging-related delays in wireless systems (100) is addressed by embodiments herein. A RAN (201) anticipates that an MS (120) is likely to be a target of communication not yet initiated. In one embodiment, a traffic channel is assigned to the MS, when a loading level of a serving cell of the MS is below an assignment threshold. This avoids paging-related delays for the MS should the MS become a target of communication. In another embodiment, the MS is signaled to transition to at least one operational mode in which paging-related delays for the MS are reduced. Such modes include a semi-dormant mode, an unslotted mode, a control hold mode, a speculative scanning mode, and a reduced slot cycle index (RSCI) mode. This allows the MS to begin participating in communication more quickly than it otherwise would, should communication targeting the MS be initiated.